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Tuesday, December 23, 2008

Funeral of man murdered by IRA

THE FAMILY of a man murdered and secretly buried by the IRA almost 30 years ago gathered for his funeral in Belfast yesterday.

Danny McIlhone's daughter, granddaughter and surviving brothers and sisters finally got the chance to lay him to rest after his remains were found on a remote hillside in Co Wicklow.

The 19-year-old man was one of the so-called "Disappeared" who were abducted and killed by republican paramilitaries during the Troubles.

At Requiem Mass at St Teresa's Church only yards from the McIlhone family home, Fr Darach MacGiolla Cathain said it was a day of mixed emotions.

"There is the obvious sadness each of us experience when we lay our loved ones to rest," he said.

"Yet there is also a very real sense of thankfulness that, after a wait of over 27 years, we can at last give his body the dignity of a Christian burial," the priest told the mourners.

Mr McIlhone vanished in 1981. Almost two decades later the IRA finally admitted they had killed him, but despite several searches in 1999 and 2000 his body was never found.

Last month forensic investigators found partial remains in an isolated mountain area.

Ahead of the service Mr McIlhone's brothers and sisters had carried his coffin from the family home at Bearnagh Drive to the church.

Among more than 500 mourners following the cortege were a number of senior republicans, including former IRA leading figure Bobby Storey and Sinn Féin Assembly member Paul Maskey.



This article appears in the print edition of the Irish Times

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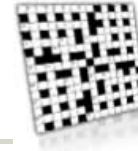


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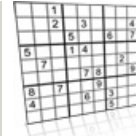
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